

Abstract

5

Lactones are prepared by catalytic carbonylation of oxiranes using a catalyst system comprising

- 10 a) at least one cobalt compound as component A and
 b) at least one metal compound of the formula (I) as component B,



(I)

15

where

M is an alkaline earth metal or a metal of group 3, 4 or preferably 12 or
 13 of the Periodic Table of the Elements,

20 R is hydrogen or a hydrocarbon radical which may be substituted on
 the carbon atoms other than the carbon atom bound to M,

X is an anion,

n is a number corresponding to the valence of M and

x is in the range from 0 to n,

25

with n and x being selected so that the compound is uncharged,

as catalyst.

30